

International Women's Day is the day we celebrate women across the world, we decided to look at the stories of some amazing women inside our organization who have broken barriers and made the Fairgrounds, Fair and Racing one of the best places in the community.

Jeanne Wasserman is the Director of Racing and the Off Track Betting Facility (Satellite Wagering on horse racing). Jeanne is what I like to call a pioneer in her Industry, an industry typically managed by men. Jeanne started at the Fairgrounds in 1986 selling racing programs, racing forms, pens and tip sheets.



Fun fact: Jeanne was promoted to Manager of Off-Track Betting (Satellite Wagering on the ponies) on March 8, 1998, International Women's Day (before IWD existed), go girl.

We asked Jeanne what are you most proud of professionally: Jeanne told us, becoming manager of the OTB, and then becoming the FIRST female Director of Racing in Northern California. Jeanne is incredibly professional and detail oriented, she is known for her "can do" spirit, professionalism, and her top-notch customer service and she has every reason to be proud of that!

What personal accomplishment is Jeanne most proud of: Raising her two daughters on her own starting when they were only 7 and 2 years old. She bought her first home at 50 years old as a single mother and her "can-do" spirit that has gotten her through life's toughest challenges.

When asked what advice she would give to her daughters, Jeanne replied: Remember that you can do anything you set your mind to. Reach for the stars.....keep that "can do" spirit! Do what makes you feel good inside and be happy. Keep the negative people out of your life. I will always love you no matter what.

If you ask anyone a word that described Jeanne I believe they would respond: DEDICATED

Judy Carrico is the Fair Operations Manager here at the Fairgrounds. What this means in Judy's words is: I have every woman's dream job; I plan a party for 450,000 of my closest friends and spend other people's money. Judy started working in the Fair industry in 1982 part time and got her first full time gig in 1984 as Fair Operations Manager. We asked Judy: What is your favorite thing about your job and she replied: The Fair! Followed by the week leading up to Fair when everyone is really focused and all of the entertainers, food vendors, and partners show up and get ready to help our community make lasting memories.



A big part of Judy's job is buying entertainment for the annual Fair, yes, it seems like so much fun, but all of us at the Fairgrounds have an opinion on what we want to hear. Judy has a huge task of bringing talent that fills the house or the FAIR! Judy has worked for years with our talent booking team and can teach each of us a thing or two about how booking entertainment over the years has changed. She gracefully gives all of us an education on the fact that entertainers no longer want to perform two shows a night and how music festivals have changed the industry.

Judy has great advice for any woman considering entering the Fair industry; FIND A MENTOR! I could not agree more. Find someone to help guide you, outside of your organization to learn about what other fairs, festivals and events are doing. Volunteer at other Fairs or go visit to learn what they are doing – you will learn a lot!

We asked Judy, what is something people would never expect that you do at work? I had no idea how she would answer and she surprised me when she said: We had a lunchtime knitting session for employees, not sure any of our team now would remember that. I am begging Judy to make knitting cool again.

Judy's philosophy to Fair when communicating to our teams is this: It's Fair, its fun...We are not curing cancer, we are creating family memories. We are the only ones who know if something is

not perfect. The gates will open whether we are ready or not. She definitely helps us keep things in perspective.

Beth Wilcox, started at the Fairgrounds in 2009 and started in Exhibits working in the Antiques Department, she has worked in HR, the front desk, but has made Maintenance her home base. Beth works in the largest operating department on the property and is one of only two women who I like to think keeps the ship steering in the right direction. Beth has gained respect across the organization because she is fair, cool, calm and collected at all times.



We asked Beth what she loves about her job and like many at the Fairgrounds she said: It is never the same thing twice. Even though Fair happens every year and we do some events year after year, we have new opportunities with each one.

The most challenging thing Beth faces is balancing the needs of property against limited resources. Being a part of the Maintenance team Beth sees first-hand what often people don't think of like after the annual Fair how are we going to get the grass back to the luscious green we have all come to love.

Beth's advice to women who are considering coming into the Fair industry or any industry is spot-on: Enjoy the moments, be prepared to think on your feet, and creativity can solve so many challenges and issues.

We were surprised to find out (and we work with Beth everyday) that she is the licensed Water Operator for ACAFA. We have two wells on grounds and she manages the distribution and treatment of the water.

Today is a day celebrated around the world honoring women who have broken barriers and we honor and celebrate Jeanne, Judy and Beth. Thank you for your commitment to the Fair, Racing and our mission.

